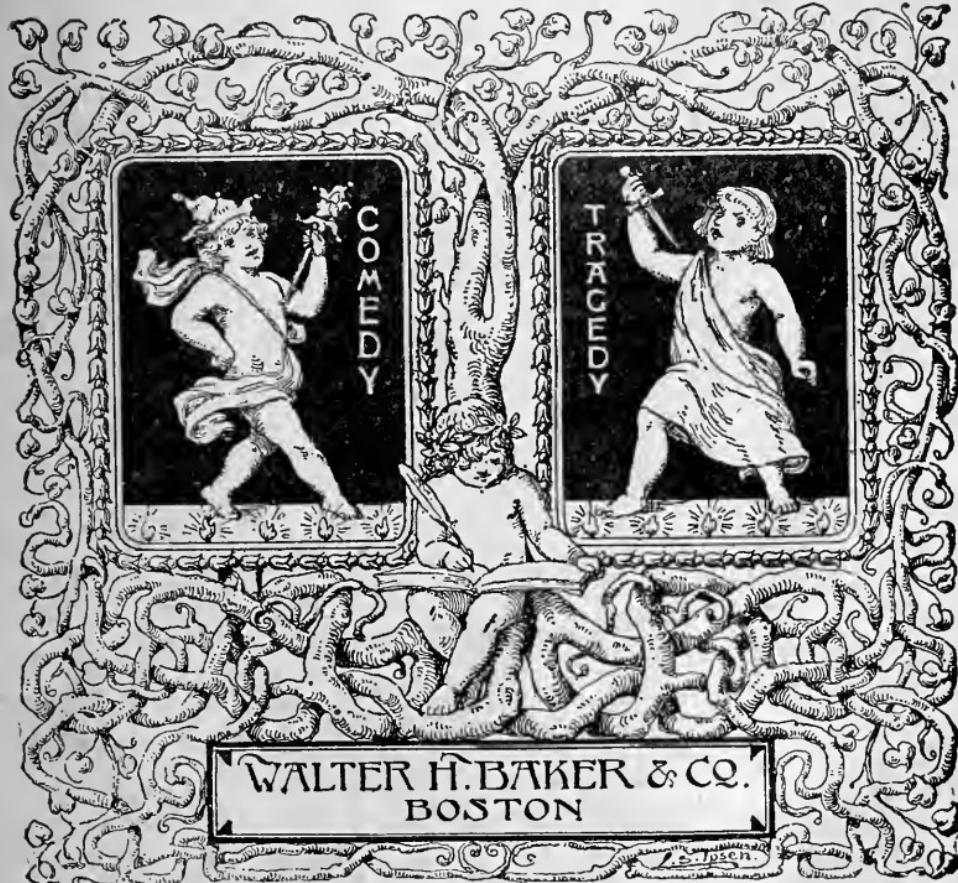


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## Romance by Schedule

### CHARACTERS

NORA.  
MAME, *Nora's chum.*  
SUE, *ever so romantic.*  
MARIAN.  
LUCY, *the pessimist.*  
DOROTHY.  
PHYLLIS, *not thin.*  
SMITHY, *an elderly teacher.*

### COSTUMES

The girls are all dressed in negligee over nightgowns and wear slippers.

SMITHY is dressed in nightgown and wrapper, slippers, hair done in small gray pigtails and curlers.



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## SYNOPSIS

Nora Lee elopes from boarding-school, leaving a note to her roommates telling them what she has done, and instructing them to look for a "surprise" under her bed, when the clock strikes one. They find a box containing a wedding supper, with which to celebrate the happy occasion. In the midst of their feasting and festivities, Nora climbs back into the window through which she had eloped, and declares matrimony, so far as she is concerned, a failure.

However, it seems that she and Jimmie Simpson, one of the "Academy boys," had only effected a very short distance in their matrimonial sprint when they met with vicissitudes in a borrowed machine. The delay, the cold, and the thought of her friends enjoying the good things of her providing, caused Nora to become somewhat peevish over the situation, and she ran home leaving Jimmie under the machine.

Meanwhile the respective parents of both, whose dearest wish it has been to secure this very match (which plan has been resentfully regarded by the young people as interfering, and anticipated with a view to putting a romantic punch into a cold-blooded "schedule") hear of the escapade, and Nora is obliged to climb out of the window again, to be married post haste.

The other girls, forgetting all caution in their excitement, are throwing rice after her, and cheering, when their door opens and the head mistress appears on the threshold. The plot merely serves as a vehicle with which to illustrate the amusing mental attitudes of the various girls.



# Romance by Schedule

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SCENE.—*Sleeping-room in girls' boarding-school. Several cots at C. back, door at L. back, window at R. back, bureau at R. front, bed at L. front, electric lamp on bureau, litter of garments hung on chairs and about the room, pictures and pennants, tennis rackets and golf clubs hung about. Clock on wall at C. back.*

(All characters on stage except NORA when curtain rises. They are standing in a group around electric lamp, over which MAME is holding towel to dim the light. A knock at the door is heard. All remain silent. Another knock.)

SMITHY (outside). Young ladies! Young ladies! . . . I thought I heard a noise. . . . (Knocks again.) Young ladies . . . are you asleep?

(MAME gives a loud prolonged snore. Steps are heard retreating down hallway. Girls burst into giggles.)

MAME. Be quiet, girls . . . she may come back. (Turns up light, removing towel. She glances at door cautiously. Holds a letter in her hand.) Now . . . let's sit down here, girls, and I'll read it all over again.

ALL (gathering about her on the floor, and speaking together). Oh, do, Mame. Yes, do! All right. Here, sit here. Yes . . . do read it over.

SUE. Oh! Isn't it lovely and romantic! . . . Oh!

MAME (reading). "Dear girls . . . by the time you receive this I shall be far, far away, probably fifteen miles . . . maybe. Little you thought what was in my heart when I sat with you at dinner to-night. You remember, I gave Mame my apple tapioca? Little you recked before dinner, when I insisted on having my own hair brush, and made Sue Wiley give me back my coral chain, that I was about to pack for life's journey!"

SUE. Isn't that too sweet! "Life's Journey!"

LUCY. Shut up, . . . Sue.

MAME. . . . "and now, as you read this, I am far, far away . . ."

LUCY. Fifteen miles.

MAME. . . . "probably a married woman."

ALL (*together*). Think of it! Say, what do you think? Did you ever? Say, girls! Nora married!

SUE. How perfectly wonderful! A married woman!

LUCY. The woods are full of them.

MAME. . . . "Even as I write, I seem to look back, years and years ago, to our happy school days together. Our basket-ball games . . . our vacations home, Smithy's old Latin class . . . she always did make me tired! . . . I see them all. Ere another morning dawns, I shall be the true wife of an honest man and . . ."

LUCY. She got that out of Lady Baudly's Secret!

DOROTHY. Oh, do be quiet, Lou . . . you spoil everything.

MAME. . . . "But, in the midst of my preparations for my life's journey . . ."

LUCY. She's said that twice!

MAME. . . . "I have thought of you all. I have put a little remembrance under Mame's pillow, to be opened the last thing before she goes to bed. For the rest of you, there is another surprise waiting under my bed. You are not to look until the clock strikes one. I trust you will respect this, my last wish. I will write you as soon as I find out where my husband and I are going to be. A wife's place is by her husband's side!"

LUCY. Especially on a wedding trip!

MAME. . . . "And you can tell old Smithy in the morning. If she found it out before it would be just like her to have us chased with bloodhounds, or something. Ever the same, your loving, affectionate Nora." Now, did you ever? I'd think that she never even told me, her chum, that she was going to elope!

LUCY. I suppose she didn't know it herself. He probably only asked her to-day.

MARIAN. It must be one of the academy boys. For the sake of our set I do hope it isn't a freshman!

DOR. Oh, Nora would never stoop to a mésalliance.

SUE (*clapping her hands*). My! Isn't it all romantic? Just think! Out of that very window. (*They all turn and*

*look at window.)* A letter on the pincushion . . . everything !

LUCY. To my mind, that business of a letter on the pincushion has been overdone.

SUE. Who wants to be original if it takes away all sentiment ! You may be a cynical woman of the world, Lucy Lane, but just you wait until you . . .

PHYLLIS. I wonder what's the surprise ? Maybe it's something to eat !

MAR. Phyllis . . . you are the worst ! Always thinking of something to eat. . . . Yet, if it is, I do hope she thought of pickles.

DOR. Goodness . . . it makes me feel creepy . . . something under the bed . . . you don't know what !

MAR. I know what it is ! I bet she's left us her clothes. I choose the pink crepe.

MAME. She'd never leave that. Girls . . . look at the clock . . . time's nearly up !

*(All wait silently. The clock strikes one. All spring for the box under the bed and pull it into middle of floor. They crowd around it and MAME takes out tissue paper.)*

MAR. Maybe it's her old doll . . . she did love that.

LUCY. Nonsense !

MAR. Well, she wouldn't take it on a wedding trip, would she ?

DOR. Or her movie picture collection.

MAME. She'd never leave that ! Oh, look, girls . . . it's a wedding cake . . . and a note. . . . Listen. *(Opens note.)* "Dear girls, if all goes well, my bridegroom and I will be one. . . ."

LUCY. I bet it's her.

MAME. . . . "We will be . . ."

LUCY *(groaning).* Fifteen miles away !

MAME. Now, Lucy ! . . . "We will be in Susanville, and you will be eating my wedding supper. I shall be thinking of you all every minute."

MAR. See here . . . a bag of rice !

PHYL. Girls ! . . . ginger pop !

MAME. Get the tooth-brush mugs, girls . . . hurry !

PHYL. There's a whole bottle for each . . . here.

*(Hands them around.)*

MAME. Girls . . . stand ! . . . To the bride's health !

(All drink and reseat themselves.)

SUE (*holding bottle pensively and letting it drip*). Poor Nora . . . entering the solemn portals of matrimony. While we feast in riotous abandon she . . .

LUCY. Slaughtered to make a Roman holiday.

PHYL. And she waiting in some hotel for breakfast time.

MAME. Of course . . . no place in the world is open at this hour. I wonder who the man can be ! She only knows Jimmie Simpson, and he's short, and she said she would never marry a short man. She said he simply must be tall and dark and devilish . . . and, well, you know Jimmie . . . listen . . . what's that !

DOR. Burglars !

(NORA's head appears at window.)

ALL (*together*). Nora ! Nora Lee ! Ah ! You back ! Nora ! Well !

LUCY (*sharply*). Heavens ! don't bring in your bride-groom. We're not dressed for company.

(NORA climbs slowly into room, banging a valise on the window sill behind her. Her hat is on one ear and she looks tired out. She fixes her attention on the spread on the floor.)

MAME. What's the matter ?

PHYL. Wasn't he . . .

MAR. Did you change your mind ?

MAME. Do tell us all about it.

NORA (*shaking her head sadly*). Girls, you will do me a kindness if you never refer to the matter again. Is all the cake gone ?

MAME. Why, no . . . heaps left . . . here !

(Hands her a great chunk. NORA sits in indifferent attitude, chewing vigorously. Silence while she eats. The girls watching her, consumed with curiosity. She heaves a sigh, looks around and finally speaks.)

NORA. I would just like to remark that matrimony isn't all it's cracked up to be.

SUE. Oh . . . are you married ?

NORA. Nearly . . . that is, we nearly got to Susanville in the machine and then . . .

ALL (*together*). What? Do tell us! Come, do tell us! Nora! Please!

NORA. Oh, nothing.

MAME. Nora . . . you're awful mean!

NORA. Well, the fact is . . . well, we simply quarreled.

SUE. Quarreled on your wedding trip!

NORA. It wasn't our wedding trip . . . yet . . . but . . . oh, I may as well tell you. . . . Got any more ginger pop? (MAME *hands her ginger pop, and she holds it in one hand, cake in other, while she tells her story.*) You see, Jimmie . . .

LUCY. What! Jimmie Simpson? Why, you said you'd never marry a short man, and Jimmie is . . .

NORA (*matter-of-fact tone*). Yes, I know I did. But I don't know any tall men . . . anyway, there we were far from home and . . . say . . . did old Smithy find out anything?

MAME. No, no . . . go on, you were fourteen miles and . . .

NORA. No—only one. . . . Say! When did you get my letter?

SUE. Oh, do go on . . . what happened?

NORA. Well, the machine balked. It stopped suddenly . . . wouldn't budge! It was Jimmie's father's machine and Jimmie . . .

SUE (*excitedly*). Did a look of agony pass over his pale face and . . .

NORA. No . . . it was dark. . . . Well, he got under the machine and began to unscrew the whole thing! I told him not to, but he did. He asked me to hold the lantern and the monkey-wrench and the oil can, and kept passing out little screws and telling me not to lose them, and I was afraid to lay them on the grass and I put them in my mouth and they did taste so of gasoline and it got fearfully cold and Jimmie didn't talk and except for his legs sticking out from under the machine I was all alone on that dark road . . .

SUE. We know . . . fourteen miles on "life's journey."

NORA. . . . And suddenly the lantern went out and Jimmie found he hadn't any matches and of course I hadn't

any and I asked if he couldn't hurry a little and then he got mad and I told him it was all his fault. And then I thought of all you girls here, all warm and jolly, eating my wedding cake, and of the ginger pop, and me running away from it all, when I didn't especially want to go anyway . . .

SUE. You didn't?

NORA. No . . . so I just laid down the oil can and the monkey-wrench and everything and grabbed my bag and ran home as fast as I could go . . . and here I am. Say . . . has everybody had two pieces? (MAME *nods and hands her another.*) Anything to take that gasolene taste out of my mouth.

SUE. Love's Labor Lost!

NORA (*getting up and yawning*). Goodness, I'm crazy to get to bed.

MAME. Oh, Nora . . . weren't you sweet to leave something for me under my pillow? I haven't seen it yet.

(*Gets package from under bed at L. front.*)

NORA. Oh, yes . . . but now, you see, that I didn't go . . . why . . . er . . .

MAME (*handing it to NORA*). Take it back then . . . just tell me . . . was it your blue belt?

NORA. Yes . . . say, if you really want it, I . . .

(*Holds it toward her.*)

MAME. Never mind . . . I don't want it.

NORA. Of course, if you think . . . ?

MAME (*resignedly*). You keep it. . . . It's all right.

SUE. My mind still reverts to your poor deserted lover under the machine.

LUCY (*turning sharply on NORA*). Look here, Nora Lee . . . you told us all once that your parents and Jimmie Simpson's parents were just crazy to have you marry each other. You said that your parents and his parents grew up together and that they had settled that you were to be married as soon as you both graduated. Now . . . why did you elope?

NORA (*hotly*). That's just it! That cut and dried old schedule made by our parents simply exasperated Jimmie and me and we decided to muss things up. You see, I liked Jim-

mie all right without having them arrange and approve and butt in the way they did. How would you like to be stuck in boarding-school having Latin and Botany . . . and all those things . . . forced on you until you were old enough to marry and then having your fate all picked out for you and waiting as certain as . . . as a ferry-boat. Jimmie doesn't like to have his family dictate to him, either. It was his idea to cut his Senior Year and all that law bunk they're trying to get him to swallow, and start life in earnest. Well, it's all over now . . . I shall never marry.

MAR. Listen . . . girls!

MAME. A whistle . . . !

NORA. Oh . . . it's Jimmie! (*Goes to window and leans far out.*) Oh, Jimmie . . . is that you? You go right away. . . . No, I won't. . . . I've changed my mind for good. Well, don't apologize. . . . It's all right . . . only . . . What? Well, I'll come down for just one minute. . . . Only one . . . mind!

[*Exit in lively manner out of window.*

SUE (with clasped hands . . . ecstatically). Girls . . . this is a crucial moment. Here are two souls working out their own destiny . . . it is not for us to play arbiter . . . it is not . . .

LUCY. She's coming back!

NORA (*climbing back into room*). Oh, girls . . . we've just got to get married now. You see his parents got his note and they rang up my parents, and they say it's awful the way we were out unchaperoned together, and all that, you know, and they're all down there now in machines, with a minister, and they're waiting for me to come! I think it's a shame keeping me up like this. I'm so sleepy. Parents are so funny.

SUE (*going close to her, earnestly, tragically*). Nora . . . is he your real affinity?

NORA. Heavens, I guess so. I'd hate to marry a stranger. Jimmie's all right. Well, good-bye. You can have the belt, Mame. Good-bye, girls. I'll write. (*She is moving toward window . . . hesitates, and comes back toward spread.*) Oh, may I have a piece . . . for Jimmie?

(MAME hands her a piece of cake. *She starts out of window holding piece of cake carefully.*)

MAME. The rice . . . girls!

(PHYL. gets bag of rice. All throw it at NORA. She takes violets from her belt, throws them and SUE catches them. Excitement rages. She says good-bye from outside; all cheer. Door opens and SMITHY, glaring, indignant, grotesquely arrayed, stands there.)

CURTAIN

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<i>The College Chap</i>	3	11	7	2½h
<i>The Country Doctor</i>	4	6	5	2h
<i>Country Folks</i>	3	6	5	2¼h
<i>The Country Minister</i>	5	8	5	2½h
<i>Cranberry Corners</i>	4	6	6	2¼h
<i>The District Attorney</i>	3	10	6	2½h
<i>Down in Maine</i>	4	8	4	2½h
<i>Elmwood Folks</i>	3	8	4	2¼h
<i>A Foul Tip</i>	3	7	3	2h
<i>How Jim Made Good</i>	4	7	3	2h
<i>Mrs. Tyler's Second</i>	3	4	2	2h
<i>Red Acre Farm</i>	3	7	5	2h
<i>Valley Farm</i>	4	6	6	2½h
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All Tangled Up	Comedy	3	5	3	2h
The Blundering Mr. Brown	"	3	4	4	1 3/4 h
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Me an' Otis	Comedy	4	5	4	2h
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Cupid's Partner . . . . .	3	0	12	2 h
The Farmerette . . . . .	3	0	7	2 h
A Girl in a Thousand . . . . .	4	0	14	2½ h
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How the Story Grew (15c.) . . . . .	1	0	8	45 m
Leave It to Polly . . . . .	2	0	11	1½ h
Lucia's Lover . . . . .	3	0	8	1½ h
Miss Fearless & Co. . . . .	3	0	10	2½ h
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Tramps' Convention . . . . .	1	17	0	1½ h
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Aunt Jerusha's Quilting Party . . . . .	1	4	12	1 h
The District School . . . . .	1	12	17	1 h
Miss Prim's Kindergarten . . . . .	1	10	11	1½ h
A Pageant of History . . . . .	6	15	9	2½ h
Scenes in the Union Depot . . . . .	1	24	18	1½ h
Taking the Census in Bingville . . . . .	1	14	8	1½ h
The Village Post-Office . . . . .	1	22	20	2 h

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